

## Eddie Chambers Hoping To Re-Establish Himself

Written by Bernard Fernandez  
Friday, 15 June 2012 13:45

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Scan the ratings of the four major sanctioning organizations and you won't find the name of "Fast" Eddie Chambers among the top 15 ranked heavyweight contenders in any of them. It's like the ratings committees of the WBC, WBA, IBF and WBO have all conveniently forgotten that the IBF's former No. 1 contender, who came within a few seconds of going the distance with WBA/IBF/WBO champion Wladimir Klitschko a little more than two years ago, has fallen off the face of the earth.

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It can be argued that the smallish Pittsburgh-born, Philadelphia-based fighter's absence from the rankings owes more to injuries and inactivity than to a steep dropoff in performance. Oh, sure, Chambers was losing big on the scorecards when the younger of boxing's dominant Klitschko brothers took him out with a crushing shot only five seconds before the final bell of their March 20, 2010, title bout in Dusseldorf, Germany, but Wladimir and older sibling Vitali, the WBC heavyweight champ, have sent any number of opponents to lullaby land during a shared reign that has continued nearly unabated since Lennox Lewis retired in 2003.

Several of the Klitschkos' victims still carry world rankings from one or more of the sanctioning bodies, so the logical conclusion can only be that Chambers – who is still held in high regard by Emanuel Steward, Wladimir's Hall of Fame trainer – is unranked solely because he has fought just once since being stopped by Wlad, that being a one-sided, unanimous decision over Derric Rossy on Feb. 11, 2011.

“Eddie is small, but his speed and balance are unbelievable,” Steward said last October, days before another cancellation of a Chambers fight due to injury. “The one time I had Evander Holyfield for his three fights with Riddick Bowe, he won by getting in and getting out, instead of trying to take Bowe head-on. I see a lot of those qualities in Eddie.”

Are those qualities still present in someone who has had only one fight in 27 months? Is Chambers, at 30, now to be considered damaged goods and on the downhill side of a career that never quite reached elite status? Is he capable of returning to a level of prominence as swiftly as he fell from it?

Those and other questions will be answered on Saturday night, when Chambers (36-2, 18 KOs) takes on Tomasz Adamek (45-2, 28 KOs) in a scheduled 12-rounder to be televised by the NBC Sports Network from the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.

Adamek, the former IBF cruiserweight and WBC light heavyweight champion, is ranked No. 7 among heavyweights by the IBF and No. 8 by the WBC, but the 35-year-old Pole shares at least some of the stigmas that have attached themselves to Chambers. He's five years older than Chambers, also has a blowout loss to a Klitschko (Vitali stopped him in 10 rounds on Sept. 10, 2011) and is unranked by the WBA and WBO, which probably consider him to have been too inactive to merit a rating. Since losing to Vitai, Adamek has fought just once, a 10-round decision over Nagy Aguilera on March 24 at the Aviator Sports Complex in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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And although on paper this matchup would appear to be fairly even – at 6-1 and 210 or so pounds, Chambers can look straight into the eyes of the 6-1½, 215-pound Adamek, with neither having to crane their heads upward at the much taller Klitschkos – there are reasons why the oddsmakers have pegged Adamek as nearly a 2-1 favorite. Adamek has a large and very vocal following in the Prudential Center, where where he will be fighting for the eighth time, and he isn't coming off a series of physical ailments that forced the cancellation of Chambers' scheduled bouts with Tony Thompson on Oct. 28 and Sergei Liakhovich on Jan. 21 due to, respectively, recurring back spasms and two fractured ribs incurred in training.

And if all that weren't enough, Fast Eddie must deal with the June 3 death of his longtime manager and former trainer, Rob Murray Sr., who was 67 when he succumbed to a bout with cancer. It was Murray who was tipped off about Chambers, then 9-0 with five KOs, fighting mostly in and around his native Pittsburgh. Murray brought the young fighter to Philadelphia in 2002 for the purpose of further developing his boxing skills. Chambers made the first of his 17 appearances at Philly's famed Blue Horizon on May 24 of that year, scoring a six-round decision over David Chappell.

Chambers described Murray as “very caring. He was somebody who was always there for you. He had the best sense of humor. He had a great spirit and was always very positive.”

Perhaps because of his own failing health issues, or maybe because he felt a new voice in the corner was needed, Murray relinquished his training duties after Chambers defeated Rossy almost as convincingly as he had in their initial meeting in 2007. Murray brought in James Bashir, a longtime associate of Emanuel Steward, to serve Chambers' chief second.

Bashir and Chambers have worked together in the gym for nearly a year, but because the Thompson and Liakhovich bouts fell through, the scrap against Adamek marks the first time they will be together on fight night. Chambers said he is looking forward to showing off all he has learned under his not-quite new trainer.

“He's worked a long time beside Emanuel,” Chambers said of Bashir. “I've had the pleasure of being around both of them, and they both know their stuff.”

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“My father (Eddie Chambers Sr.) was a great trainer and so was Rob. Bashir is adding to the foundation they gave me. He knows how to *plan* a fight. People think you just go in there and fight. No. You work on a strategy, and then you try to execute it.

“James Bashir is one of the best-kept secrets in boxing.”

The more pressing question is whether Chambers, for so long out of sight and thus out of mind, is ready to re-announce his return as a major factor in the heavyweight division, non-Klitschko category. He has scored victories over the likes of Alexander Dimitrenko, Samuel Peter, Livin Castillo, Calvin Brock and Dominick Guinn. It wouldn't be the biggest upset in the world if he were to go into Adamek territory and come away with a victory.

“Every fight is a must-win, but in my case people are questioning whether I have anything left,” Chambers said, candidly. “I'm only 30. People come up to me and say, ‘Are you still active? Have you retired?’ Hey, I had two fights scheduled, but they got scratched because of injuries. Doesn't mean I'm not around anymore.

“You have to have the attitude that if you keep pushing, eventually something good will happen. This fight could be my express train right back to the top. It could put me back in the conversation as the best American hope in the heavyweight division.”

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### **deepwater says:**

Fast Eddie is good. I pick him in a dec. I saw fast Eddie beat the crap outta Shannon Briggs in sparring and called Derrick rossys manager and said hey sal pull out of the damn fight right now, rossy too slow for fast Eddie. Where is rossy after fast Eddie took him out.

### **brownsugar says:**

Boxings version of the Tiger Woods Protege' (at least as far as his mannerisms and speach is concerned) Eddie Chambers,.... is nigh unbeatable if he comes in around 205 lbs and is not facing one of the oversized champs.

But Warrior Adamek will test the upper limits of his tolerance at 225lbs.

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He should still have the skills to dissect Adamek over 12 hard fought rounds.

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